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ABSTRACT

Channel management, a concept developed in marketing to refer to the process by which a product is moved from production to consumption, uses a channel of distribution operating at several levels, each responsible for one or more of the activities of moving the product forward to the consumer. The function of channel management is to select the most efficient channel, taking into account the environment, product, and consumer characteristics. When language is seen as a product, the learner as a consumer, and the various levels of government and educational administration as elements of the channel, the approach can be applied to language planning, of which English for Specific Purposes (ESP) should be seen as an integral part. The number of institutions from production to consumption indicates the length of a channel. The longer the channel, the more likely the planning goals are to be distorted or modified, unless links between the levels are maintained and effective feedback procedures exist for movement of information between and within levels. Application of the concept is illustrated with descriptions and evaluations of ESP programs in Tunisia. (MSE)

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LANGUAGE PLANNING, CHANNEL MANAGEMENT, AND ESP.

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SECTION I

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Chris Kennedy

1 INTRODUCTION

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES
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One of the purposes of the seminar for which this paper is being
written is to try and identify areas in Language Planning (LP) which
are under-researched and to suggest ways in which the discipline may
progress. I shall be arguing that not enough detailed attention has
been devoted to implementation in LP, especially at the more micro
levels of planning, and that few evaluation studies have been
reported. One of the problems that has faced those in LP is the lack
of adequate frameworks within which implementation studies can be
described and evaluated. A way round this is to look to planning in
other areas to see whether suitable frameworks might be applied to
LP. In this paper, I look at an approach that has been developed in
marketing management and suggest its application to LP. I shall
illustrate some of the benefits of the approach in the evaluation of
LP implementation, using ESP programmes in Tunisia as an example.

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2 LANGUAGE PLANNING AND ENGLISH FOR SPECIFIC PURPOSES

For the purposes of this paper I do not wish to get involved in debating the different definitions of English for Specific Purposes (ESP). I ask readers to accept a definition for the moment: that ESP is the teaching of English in a situation where the ultimate objective of the learner is not a qualification in English but some other skill or expertise. The study of ESP is therefore a means to an end, a facilitator of objectives which may have no direct connection with English language teaching. Here, I shall be concerned with ESP in higher education where its growth and impact have been most noticeable. At this level ESP is associated with the teaching of staff or students of science, technology and management in particular, who are studying English either because they think or a decision-maker above them thinks it may help them in their studies or their professions. ESP is a natural consequence of economic and political forces. These have changed English from a previously imposed language to either an additional language for use within a country, where its role may be reduced by the spread of mother tongues, or an international language for communication outside the country (Kennedy, forthcoming 1986). This role has developed to the extent that in order for a scientist and to a lesser extent a businessman to become part of the international scientific or business community, a knowledge of English has become certainly desirable, in some cases essential.

Now it might be thought that the connection between LP and ESP was slight, and it is true that ESP has not received much attention from those writing on LP. However, this depends on how we define LP. The most frequent definition is that it is the planning of deliberate changes in the form or use of a language, typically at government level. This definition often seems to have the effect in practice of creating a cut-off point between government policy and its implementation. An alternative way of looking at LP is suggested by Tollefson (1981), who regards the complete process from policy-making at government level down to its implementation in the classroom as part of LP, with policy being formulated and implemented at each stage. Looked at from this viewpoint, ESP is an integral part of the LP process, part of LP implementation at a micro level. If we adopt this approach, both LP planners traditionally concerned with higher-level planning and those working in ESP at lower levels should benefit. Higher-level planners might well devise alternative plans if they were aware of lower-level implementation. ESP practitioners would be made more aware of factors outside the classroom influencing their teaching, which would extend, for example, our theory of syllabus planning, until recently too narrowly focussed on the student in the classroom, rather than the environment outside it. Both ends of the planning spectrum have perhaps been setting unrealistic goals, the failure of which has often undermined ESP programmes.

3 PLANNING IN OTHER AREAS.

Language planning is a relatively new discipline of academic study (though its practice is surely centuries old), which, feeling the need to establish its own subject credentials, has not availed itself of the knowledge of planning theory developed in other areas. There are some notable exceptions. Rubin (1979) has suggested planning models used in town planning could be useful in developing a theory of LP, and Fishman (1973) has drawn parallels between LP and economic and cultural planning. Cooper (1979) has gone a step further to argue that language could perhaps be regarded as a product, to be developed, marketed, and distributed to customers in the same way as any commercial product. Now no doubt the analogy will not hold completely, but LP, seen from this point of view, can offer insights of which we might otherwise be unaware. This 'language as product' approach puts a particular emphasis on the customer and market forces. It may provide a useful means not only of describing one system and demonstrating reasons for the success/failure of a particular policy, but also of comparing different LP situations. We may be able more clearly to isolate different processes and perhaps identify criteria for successful implementation. It would also provide a valuable way into LP evaluation, a neglected area in LP studies (Rubin 1983).

In the next section, I should like to describe a framework that has been developed in marketing management studies and see whether it could be applied to the study of LP processes. The concept of channel

management and its characteristics is taken from Kotler (1980) and Foxall (1981).

SECTION II

1 CHANNEL MANAGEMENT.

Channel management is the management of the process by which a product is moved from production to consumption. The movement is facilitated by the management of a channel of distribution operating at a number of levels, each level being responsible for one or more of the activities necessary to move the product forward to the customer. The job of channel management is to select the most efficient channel taking into account the environment and product and customer characteristics. This may seem at first sight to be far removed from LP, but if we adopt the notion of planning suggested earlier, it is not difficult to see language as the product, the learner as the consumer, and the various levels of government and educational administration as elements of the channel. The number of institutions from production to consumption indicates the length of a channel. The greater the number of institutions or intermediaries the more likely goals are to be distorted or modified unless links between the different levels are maintained, and unless effective feedback procedures exist for the movement of information both up and down the levels and within levels. Typically, educational systems

are complex channels with links and feedback mechanisms difficult to maintain. Feedback from lower levels seems particularly hard to create and both students and teachers will often complain of being acted upon by higher authority without consultation.

At each level, the product may 'belong' to the central authority or be taken over by members of the channel level. In terms of language, the extent to which members identify with the product, wish to 'own' it, and the degree to which they are permitted or given opportunity to 'own' it, is important. Centralisation, for example, can severely reduce the autonomy of teachers (and their degree of control over the product) by insisting on a common syllabus. In ESP, the notion of a common syllabus, at least at national level, is a contradiction of what an ESP approach stands for, though cases do exist.

In some cases, because of the environment in which the product, here, English, is used, 'ownership' (language acquisition and use) will be freely accepted, even demanded by the customer. In other cases, its acquisition may have to be forced to a greater or lesser extent. The greater the degree of force, because of customer resistance, the more likely the product is to fail. Resistance may be caused, amongst other things, by inaccessibility of the language. However much the language may be available in purely physical terms (eg number of hours taught), if the social distance between the L1 and L2 communities is too great (Schumann 1976 ; Gibbons 1984) learning may be impeded. If such negative conditions exist, the teacher's role becomes difficult and demanding and he will need all the more moral and resource support.

The ultimate objective of channel management is to produce as far as possible, the most effective channel consonant with the resources available and constraints imposed. Existing channels will need to be evaluated and alternatives suggested if problems are found in the channel. Some recent writings (Rogers 1982) have suggested resources for ELT should be concentrated at higher levels in the educational system (effectively advocating the expansion of ESP programmes at the expense of more general programmes at secondary level and below.) In terms of the approach described in this paper, this would constitute a major change in channel distribution, since the product would be reaching a different customer at a different time. Another example of channel alternatives would be to see to what extent semi-private or private institutions could or should co-operate with the public sector in ELT and ESP provision. A recent report (Times Educational Supplement 25.10.85) notes that the British Council is considering extending its direct teaching services to some sectors of higher education in Spain, which would modify the existing channel of provision and introduce the influence of 'outside' channel members.

2 CHANNEL AND LEVEL LEADERS.

A channel is headed by a leader, and each level also. These leaders play a role in innovation and change and should aim to prevent or reduce conflict between and across the various levels. Leadership should be distinguished from the exercise of power. The former implies the management of change, the latter maintenance of a status

quo through coercive means. Although in the short-term control may appear to succeed, and in some cases there may be no alternative strategy, in the long-term it rarely does. Problems will re-surface and dissatisfaction among channel members subject to the control will increase with a consequent fall in motivation.

Conflict may arise when objectives set at one level do not match those set at another, or where objectives are lacking. In education, the conflict is frequently expressed by 'them' and 'us' attitudes between a ministry and teachers, and between teachers and students. There may be fundamental differences in roles and functions at different levels, as where there is a split between administrators and academics, the one group setting financial or political objectives, the other educational.

Solutions to such conflicts are difficult and may not be possible. Leaders, however, can try to set superordinate goals to create solidarity, or increase benefits relative to costs. Benefits can be measured in financial terms, but other sorts of benefits would involve creating better working conditions and a sense of achievement and responsibility among the members. The latter attitudes can be encouraged by participation in decisions and making members more responsible for the management of their own level, (and thereby increasing a sense of 'ownership' in the product which was discussed above). In ESP, cost-benefit problems can occur at the level of the teacher, who finds, for a number of complex reasons outside his control, that his earning power is low, and his status in the institution low in comparison with the subject lecturers. Asking a

teacher to undertake additional responsibility and involving him in decision-making may not work if this cost-benefit factor is not taken into account and adjusted. Similar problems may occur at the level of the student who has evaluated the benefits to be gained from studying English and has calculated that the costs, in terms of his time and effort, are too high. The result is that an institution is forced to control the level of motivation artificially by introducing sanctions related to attendance at English classes and the passing of English examinations. As we indicated above, such control procedures give rise to low levels of achievement, and strategies are devised by those subject to control to find ways around the sanctions.

3 FUNCTIONS AND TASKS OF CHANNEL LEVELS

Channel members all play a part in moving the product towards the customer, and functions and activities are divided among the levels according to the experience and expertise of the members at each level. A number of functions will need to be performed if the gap between producer and customer is to be effectively bridged. One of the major tasks of channel leaders then is the training and motivating of members and their selection to appropriate tasks.

A list of functions follows. It is not suggested that all the functions should be carried out with equal weight, nor that they are all necessary. However, applied to LP processes, the categories might produce useful data on which to base evidence for evaluation of

different channels and their effectiveness. The list is not in order of priority.

a Research

There will need to be a research function responsible for input to different levels in the channel, carried out by outsiders if that is more effective. At higher levels a government may need information on the national language situation, which when combined with research input from other channels (for example economic forecasts), will assist the formulation of language policy. A ministry curriculum team may be responsible for research relevant to policy implementation, which would have implications for materials provision and teacher training. Teachers too can undertake research into their classrooms and their students, although this aspect of research has been undervalued (Kennedy forthcoming). Research completed at the different levels should be part of the communication system and results should be fed up and down the channel and across levels. Many will recognise the somewhat idealistic nature of these comments, but it is salutary to draw a parallel with marketing, where designing a product without market research into customer or retailer attitudes to the product would invite disaster. The extent to which governments take notice of research is a matter of some dispute. Whiteley (1973) is sceptical of the importance policy-makers attach to sociolinguistic surveys, but goes on to suggest ways in which their results may be made more relevant to them, and Paulston (1979) thinks that language planners should have no role in policy-making, but should concern themselves with those decisions concerned directly with language and

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with those areas where their expertise is most likely to be needed, such as language acquisition, and materials design.

b Promotion.

This function promotes the product throughout the channel levels, and would involve encouraging or discouraging the acquisition and/or learning of a language or languages or varieties of a language. Means employed may take the form of government documents and reports, or public statements directed at consumers and interest groups. Various strategies are available; some, in the form of information-giving, seek to persuade; others, using more coercive means, force consumers to take the desired action. The Malaysian government requires all primary school teachers to pass an examination in Malay, and is now threatening to dismiss those who fail, a fairly overt example of one way in which groups may be coerced into the learning of a language. Promotion in marketing has to occur at the lowest levels in order that the customer purchases the product. Compare that situation with that of the student who is rarely involved in decisions regarding his learning of a language. Yet when he is there is likely to be considerable rise in motivation (Kennedy 1985).

c Contact.

This function covers relationships between the different levels and the customer. The most direct relationship is that between teacher and student, hence the importance, for the most part unrecognised in language planning policies, of the teacher. The teacher is influential,

not only because he presents the language to the student through materials and procedures in the classroom, but also because his attitudes towards a range of factors can be transmitted to the learner and influence language learning. He is also in the unusual position (in marketing terms) of not only being responsible for the student's exposure to the language in the classroom, but of being a user himself.

d Matching.

This activity is concerned with shaping and fitting the product to the buyer's requirements, a process which should occur at all stages from manufacturing to assembly and packaging. The same should hold for education, but the situation is not as clear-cut, since the values of different types of educational product are rarely agreed by all parties concerned. ESP has been almost obsessively concerned with this matching process at the level of materials design. Because many programmes have operated a narrow definition of matching needs with ultimate objectives, and have not concerned themselves enough with wants, expectations have not always been fulfilled.

A ministry policy may be in advance of learner requirements or lagging behind them. The first situation may occur where a rapid change in policy has been made without sufficient information-gathering and consultation at lower levels; the second, where a society's needs have changed and the upper levels have been slow to recognise them, or indeed refuse to recognise them in order to maintain a status quo. Further problems will occur if a policy at one

level is passed down the channel for implementation without adequate resources, or without understanding or support from those involved in implementation. Matching will be very difficult in these circumstances and will become cumulatively worse the further down the channel the policy proceeds.

e Negotiation.

In marketing, the price that will be put on the product, the value to the customer, has to be established. In LP, all levels of the channel are likely to put a value on learning English. Thus, government policy will mirror the importance of English to those in power; this value will be transmitted in the form of decisions detailing for instance the number of institutions where English will be taught, or deciding on the choice between English or a mother tongue as a medium of education. In higher education, Deans or those responsible for programmes will decide how much English will be taught, and of course the student will himself put a value on his acquisition of English. If that value is low, and the Dean's high, then sanctions may have to be imposed to increase the value, such as making English a requirement for a degree qualification. Much conflict is created in a channel if teachers of ESP put a high value on English, (this is natural, since they have a vested interest), but those above and below them in the channel give it a low priority, which in turn affects the ESP teachers' status. Interest groups outside the channel are important here, as they may put a high value on a language and attempt to force channel changes to get its value raised. Where a channel leader gives way to these pressures but does not in fact

accept the argument for a higher value, the result is a 'lip-service' policy, unlikely ever to be effectively formulated and implemented.

f Distribution.

This refers to the movement of the product through the channel. Two aspects will be mentioned here. One is the decision where English should be taught (which institutions and how many); the other concerns the physical distribution of materials and resources for the language.

g Finance.

Funds must be spread through the channel to cover LP costs at all levels. Normally each level leader is allocated and given responsibility for funds. A key factor in ESP is who in the channel controls the funding for ESP programmes. Funds may be allocated separately within a Ministry or they may not be differentiated until Faculty level. In some cases, ESP units are not funded as such at all, but may have to rely on the sympathy of a department head who uses the unit's services.

h Risk-taking.

At first sight, this may seem a strange function to include in LP processes, but if a system wishes to change and innovate, some members of the channel must be willing to take risks. Generally, in education, risk-taking is minimised and change and innovation slow.

Rates of and openness to change will also vary according to the culture in which the channel is placed and in many situations risk-taking may be punished rather than rewarded. Most channel members will want to avoid risk-taking if levels above and below them are difficult to control and not sympathetic to change. Teachers will only take risks if it can be demonstrated that benefits will outweigh costs. Appeals made to ideas of self-renewal and professional satisfaction will only work if other factors, including those of a financial nature, have already been satisfied. Students too are unwilling to take risks and will feel uncertain towards a new methodology unless its benefits can be clearly demonstrated.

4 EVALUATION OF LANGUAGE PLANNING.

One of the values of taking a framework similar to the one I have outlined and applying it to LP would be that we might be able to provide a means of evaluation of LP processes. The framework could be used to classify and order data from which a picture of language channel management would emerge. By looking at the channel as a whole, realistic judgements could be made about plans and their implementation. In ESP particularly, if we saw ESP programmes as part of a much larger context, not only would they be better designed, but reasons for failure/success could be assigned more accurately at the appropriate level in the channel. I should like to illustrate the sort of thing I mean by applying part of the channel management framework to LP and ESP in Tunisia. I cannot undertake a full analysis here .

so I shall concentrate on levels of channel management and their members.

SECTION III

1 CHANNEL MANAGEMENT AND ESP IN TUNISIA.

1.1 The environment.

Tunisia wishes to establish a manufacturing base for its export goods to help an economy which will shortly be without the benefit of its own oil revenues (already small in comparison with those from the Gulf States). There needs to be a foundation of technological expertise on which manufacturing processes can draw. Tunisia is therefore interested in transfer of technology from the developed countries, particularly the USA. Part of the export policy is to seek markets other than the traditional ones of France and Italy, and to encourage foreign exchange earnings through the development of tourism, again drawing clients from countries other than France. As these economic moves take place, so Tunisia is growing more aware of its identity as an Arab, Moslem nation, no longer tied, as it was during the Protectorate, to France. A gradual weakening of links with France, then, culturally and politically, as well as economically, is taking place, but it must be emphasized that this a slow process, and one which does not meet with the approval of all sectors in Tunisia.

One of the effects of these economic changes can be seen in the relative spread and decline of Arabic, French and English in Tunisia. French, formerly a major international language for communication outside the country and an additional language within it, is beginning to play a more limited role in Tunisia. Most government functions are now carried out in Arabic. Primary education is almost totally Arabic-medium, with French being taught as a second language, rather than being used as a medium of learning, and at the secondary level only technology, science and maths remain in French. Some subjects in higher education lending themselves to Arabicisation are now taught through Arabic, for example, philosophy and theology, and aspects of other subjects, such as economics, are beginning to be taught through Arabic. French, however, remains a major language for access to higher education and to the professions. Its influence at early stages in the educational system is considerable, since the marks gained in the French part of the secondary school entrance exams are as important as those in the Arabic section.

If French as an additional language is weakening, however, there is still a need for an international language to serve for communication with non-Arabic-speaking countries. This role in the past was held by French, but French is world-wide under threat as an international language, and given some negative feelings in Tunisia towards the language of the former coloniser, English is beginning to take on the role of the international language. The uncertain economic situation described above, part of the solution to which is seen to be access to the business and science community world-wide, but particularly in the USA, also explains the interest in English at higher levels.

- (b) creation of legal texts relating to university courses, examinations, and degree regulations. These texts are published in the 'Journal Officiel', once entered become law, and are therefore difficult to modify without a long process of consultation and decision-taking;
- (c) co-ordination with the Faculties and Institutes of the University of Tunis. There is one university in Tunisia, with some 30 Faculties/Institutes, but no Head of the University. Deans and Directors operate fairly autonomously therefore, with the Ministry acting as co-ordinator;
- (d) recruitment of staff for the Faculties/Institutes;
- (e) co-ordination of research programmes;
- (f) selection of students for entry to the Faculties/Institutes, granting of bursaries, and provision of accommodation;
- (g) supply and distribution of finance throughout the channel;
- (h) planning development and compiling statistical records;
- (i) management of international exchanges and educational aid programmes.

I have listed these functions in some detail to demonstrate that the Ministry has a purely administrative role and is not directly concerned with curriculum affairs (eg the academic content of courses). As we have seen, curriculum regulations are entered in the 'Journal Officiel', but the Ministry approves rather than creates or implements them.

The channel leader here is the Minister who can initiate broad change in line with general government policy and within the budget at his

However the role played by English, which is increasing but still minor, also explains the value policy-making authorities at high levels in the channel put on English and some of the reasons for apparent problems in implementation lower down the channel. There is undoubtedly a need for English, but any gap between the ideal and reality can be expressed as a need, and unless needs are assessed realistically, inappropriate plans and unattainable objectives will be produced.

1.2 Channel management levels.

(1) Policy at the highest level is set by the President, the Prime Minister and the Cabinet. Language policy at this level is rarely stated, although information is sometimes presented to the Arabic- and French-language press in the form of interviews or statements which will reflect government attitudes. Attitudes can also be 'read' from actions taken. Thus, the present Prime Minister, Mohammed Mzali, has been influential in spreading the use of Arabic in the nation's Ministries, and supported the creation of a new experimental secondary school where science subjects are being taught through English (Kennedy, J. 1985).

(11) The next level, more directly relevant to ESP, is the Ministry of Higher Education. (A separate Ministry is responsible for primary and secondary education). The main functions of this Ministry are:

(a) definition of teaching objectives (in general socio-political terms);

limitations imposed by the Ministry, but the Dean initiates action and change.

It is also at this level that a more concrete implementation of language policy is detectable. In principle, it is the Dean/Director who will decide on the language to be used as the medium of instruction in the Faculty/Institute, though in practice the process is more complex. If, for example, a Dean were unilaterally to initiate a policy of Arabic-medium teaching in an institution, (and there would be nothing legally to prevent his doing this), he would undoubtedly be inviting problems from staff and students and the Ministry would be unlikely to approve such a move. The Dean/Director will also initiate policy regarding English teaching in his institution, though heads of departments and subject teachers (but rarely the English teachers themselves) will be influences here.

No general policy is adopted regarding English, Faculty/Institute-wide, which is sensible since each institution is likely to have different requirements for English, depending on student intake and the nature of the speciality studied. Unfortunately, however, this is not the real reason for lack of a general policy, since specific institution-based policies are also missing. Deans will rarely state the objectives of their English programmes except at best in very general behavioural terms, and often the objectives that are stated are unrealistic given the characteristics of the teachers, the students and the administrative decisions that are made with regard to English. The result is that Deans/Directors are often disappointed

sympathetic to the learning of English. Within the larger English units a co-ordinator does tend to emerge who may act as the link between the Dean and the unit, but this position is not part of the formal structure at this level, and it is undertaken on a voluntary basis.

Resources such as books and audio equipment must be met from general funds and Deans/Directors are reluctant generally to commit them to the English programme. As a result, English units are generally under-resourced. I do not believe that this is the major problem that it is often made out to be, and would put a greater priority on the improvement in the quality of human resources, specifically, the training of the ESP teacher. This is a theme important enough to warrant discussion separately, but perhaps one or two examples will give some indication of the problem. We have seen up to now that where objectives have been stated they have been made in behavioural terms. A Dean, for instance, might want his students to read English-language journals or understand visitors lecturing in English. We will not go into the feasibility of these objectives here. The point is that when the level of the teacher is reached, he in turn either does not define the objectives of his teaching, or re-defines the behavioural objectives received from the Dean into linguistic ones. As a result, the teaching of grammar and vocabulary for its own sake becomes important and forms the basis of the English programme with little regard as to whether the students need or want this linguistic approach. Nor are the structural objectives integrated into any kind of agreed syllabus. Teachers work in isolation from one another (though there are noteworthy exceptions).

disposal. At the time of writing, for example, the Minister is considering changes which would affect discipline, student grants and university lecturing grades and career structure. He will still, however, need to get the support of the Deans/Directors and they in turn that of their staff.

There are few policy statements concerning languages, including English. The main concern for English within the Ministry arises from the technology transfer agreement with the USA whereby selected undergraduates and postgraduates are sent to the States for further study. This programme has tended to highlight the problems of teaching English in the Faculties/Institutes since the pass rate in the TOEFL test for example is not encouraging, and special English teaching programmes have had to be set up in Tunisia and the USA for those participating in this scheme. The problem, however, has not resulted in effecting change in the teaching of English at lower levels in the channel.

(iii) The next level is headed by the Deans and Directors of the Faculties/Institutes who are assisted in their decision-making by a 'Conseil Scientifique', a committee of senior academics and administrators. The Dean is probably the most powerful potential force for change in the channel. It is he who, with the support of the 'Conseil Scientifique', will decide on budget distribution, proportion of part-time and full-time teachers recruited, courses, and relative weight attached to each course. Such decisions will have to be approved by the Ministry, and, indeed must fall within the budget

so there is little standardisation across classes in the same year, and little concept of progression through the student's university course as a whole. This state of affairs should not be blamed on the ESP teacher, but on the lack of training and incentive offered to him.

CONCLUSION

This has been a brief illustration of the application of a channel management framework to LP and ESP. It is in places oversimplified and many more aspects of the channel would need to be investigated before a full picture was drawn. However, what is beginning to emerge is the following:

- 1 Given the role and status of English in Tunisia, its value, though increasing, is still low to members of each channel level. Some decisions are influenced by this, others reinforce it, few, if any, appear to have taken it into account.
- 2 The channel consists of a number of levels, with decisions passed down the channel, and little opportunity for feedback .
- 3 Objectives are rarely stated at each level, and where they are or are implied, they do not start from the viewpoint of the final consumer, the student, or the intermediary, the teacher. Nor do they take account of the constraints present at each level.

and critical when they discern no improvement in the students' English.

Overall, there has been an increase in Faculty/Institute legislation in favour of English. The number of institutions now demanding a pass in English in the school-leaving Baccalaureat examination has increased, as have the number of tertiary institutions requiring the compulsory study of English (Hemissi 1985). Little thought, however, is given to the implications of such legislation in terms of implementation when English is 'downgraded' in face of the demands of the content subjects. We are not suggesting that these subject demands are unjustified, rather that given their existence, the role of English should be evaluated and planned in the institutions. Otherwise, English study will be allocated on an ad hoc basis. This is generally what occurs. English will often be taught at unpopular times, perhaps only once a week for 1 1/2 hours, will be distributed arbitrarily over the 4-year university course, and will be given a low weighting or 'co-efficient' in relation to the content subjects. The latter is understandable. Few subject lecturers, however important they think English may be, would want to award a graduate qualification in science, for example, knowing that part of the reason for the student's success was ability in English rather than the subject speciality, which would be one consequence of raising the co-efficient for English. However, the result of English's low co-efficient is that students, who are adept at matching a subject's learning value and its weighting in the examinations, put less effort than they might into the acquisition of English. English is compulsory in many institutions and a failure in English in the end-

of-year examinations should result in a 'repeat' year (a 'redoublement'). This is largely cosmetic, since no content lecturer or indeed English teacher would wish to keep a student back a year because of a fail in English. Distribution of English over the student's university career is a clear case of a mismatch between administrative and academic needs. English is taught largely in the first two years of the university course and then begins to decrease in the last two years, and is rarely taught at all at postgraduate level. The consequence is that just as a student's needs for English are becoming more apparent to him, with a consequent rise in motivation, his contact time with the language is reduced.

(iv) The next level is the subject department. In many cases an ESP programme will have been initiated as the result of suggestions from a particular departmental head who, perhaps because of his own training, or the demands of his subject speciality, feels English is important.

(v) Two further levels in the channel should follow: the ESP teachers themselves and the students of English, the ultimate consumers of the product. However, it is difficult to describe them in terms of levels, since in the channel under discussion their influence is minimal, highlighting of course one of the major problems in this particular channel. Most Faculties/Institutes have one or more teachers of English, but no institution has an English department as such. One consequence is that the only way English teachers can obtain resources is either by direct contact with the Dean/Director or through an intermediary such as a head of department who may be

4 No research function exists at any level, nor is there any member specifically responsible for ELT development at any level.

5 Promotion of English appears to be achieved through legal devices (ie they are mainly coercive in nature).

6 Matching of national, institutional, and individual needs is not attempted. (See 3. above).

7 Distribution of English teaching is not planned but arbitrary.

8 Financial resources are distributed down the channel, but at no point is a separate allocation reserved for English.

9 By the time the product reaches the teacher, most decisions have been taken, without consultation. The decisions that remain (those concerning syllabus and materials design) are complex and the teacher has not been prepared to deal with them.

These are the sorts of observations that can be made from approaching LP, as I have defined it, from the point of view of channel management. Although they may read like a list of criticisms, this is far from my intention. The list can act as part of the descriptive, not judgemental phase in evaluation. A language planner, acting perhaps as adviser to a Ministry, would be ill-advised to use the list as a basis for a report. This would serve little purpose and might well antagonise. Many of the comments above relate to socio-

cultural and political conditions which a planner will have to regard as fixed. The value of a channel management approach is that the planner may be able to identify levels where alternative ways of operating might be possible, and at the same time be aware that any change in one level of the channel may only be partial since the level concerned will be just one of the many that make up the channel. Perhaps this understanding will lead to a more realistic approach to LP and its implementation, and that evaluation of LP, in its judgemental phase, will take place with less exhortation and more constructive advice of relevance to the decision-takers.

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